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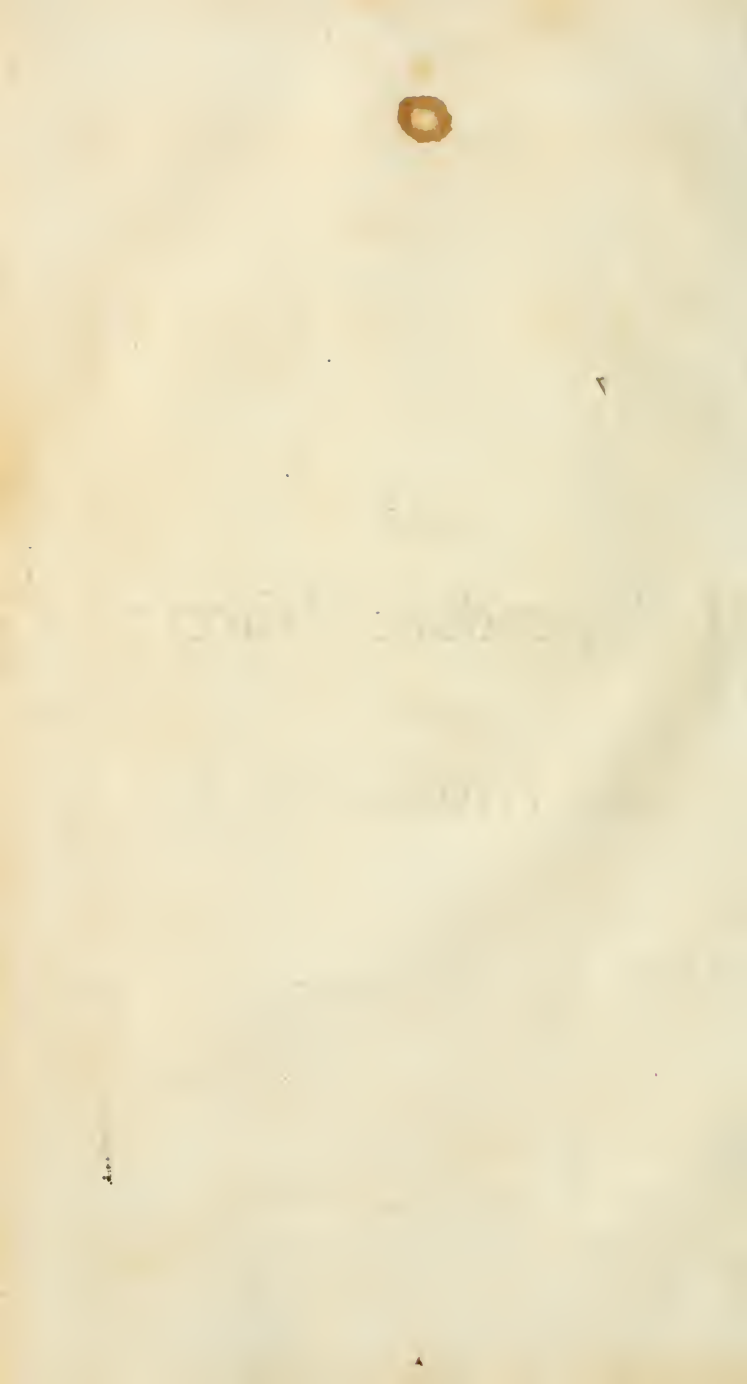
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THE
Independant Briton :
OR,
FREE THOUGHTS, &c.

[Price One Shilling.]



THE
INDEPENDANT BRITON:

O R,
FREE THOUGHTS

ON THE
Expediency of gratifying the PEOPLE'S
Expectations ;

AS TO
Securing the *Liberty* of the *Press* ; restoring the
Freedom of the *Stage* ; preventing *Bribery* in
Elections ; excluding *Place-Men* from *Seats*
in the *House of Commons* ; repealing the *Sep-*
temnial Act, &c.

Dedicated to the
COMMONS of GREAT-BRITAIN.

*Non minor est virtus quam quærere, parta tueri,
Casus inest illic, hic erit Artis opus.*

Ovid.

Omnia summa ratione gesta fortuna etiam sequitur.

Liv.

Qui facilis credit facilis quoque fallitur idem.

Palingen.

L O N D O N :

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TO THE
COMMONS of *Great-Britain.*

Brethren, Freemen, Fellow-Subjects!

OUR Condition at present seems to resemble that of a *Ship's Crew*, escaped from the *Fury* of a *Tempest*, and beyond their own Expectations, arrived *safely* on *Shore*. That we should dedicate a *few Moments* to the Expression of our *Joy*, on so great a *Deliverance* is not strange, but certainly it becomes us to take *Care* after this *happy Event* at *Sea*, not to subject ourselves to new *Dangers* on *Land*, by forgetting to take the *necessary Precautions*, for fixing safely where we find ourselves at
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present. Our *Perils* were caused by *others* ; our *Security* must be a *Work* of our own.

We have often heard it said, that the *People* are mutable, irresolute, and incapable of taking Advice ; we have heard this particularly applied to *Britons*, as if we were infected with these Follies in the *highest Degree*. We have in some Measure vindicated ourselves, by the *Vigour* and *Steadiness* of our *Conduct* for some Years past. It remains that we *persist* with like *Resolution*, till we have gain'd what we sought, and reap'd the *Fruit* of our long continued *Toils*.

To set the *Expediency*, and even the *Necessity* of this in a *clear Light*, to shew you what we have been *seeking*, and how happy we shall be, if we *acquire* what we sought, is the *Business* of the following *Pages* ; wherein I have endeavoured to be *succinct* without *Obscurity*,
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and to express myself *plainly*, but with *Decency*. I know that your *Freedom* is derived from, and must be protected by *Laws*; and therefore I have shewn you from *Reason*, and the *Authority* of the *greatest Patriots*, what *Laws* are wanting to make you *for ever free*.

Far from desiring to give you *high Ideas* of your *own Power*, to encourage you to *loud Clamours* on Pretence of *Rights*, or to raise your *Authority* above that of the *Legislature*, I have shewn you the *legal Path*, which will lead you to all *just Purposes*, without transgressing the *Bounds of Moderation*; and having done this, I hope I shall be *entitled* to your *Protection*, if my *Freedom* in *Discourse* should expose me [as I am not conscious it will] to the *Displeasure* of *any*.

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Countrymen,

I have but a few *Words* more to say : Be *loyal* to your *Prince*, obedient to the *Laws*, united amongst yourselves, and *Corruption* will never be able to *enervate* the *Strength* of, your *Government* again, nor will any *foreign Foes* be able to look you in the *Face*. The *Love* of *Liberty*, and a just *Concern* for *Property*, will make every *Briton* a *Soldier*, if invaded from *Abroad* ; and our just *Title* to the *Sovereignty* of the *Seas*, will ever be maintained by the *Valour* of our *Seamen*, if the *Constitution* flourish at home.

Adieu.



T H E

Independant Briton.



S Quarrels amongst Friends are best prevented by *free Expositions*, so it seems to be the most natural Way of avoiding *public Disturbances*, to hear patiently the *Sentiments* of a *free People*. We have been lately told, and I doubt not with Truth, that some great Men desire nothing so much as to have their Power sanctified by the *Voice* of the *Nation*, and to be sure this is a wise Choice, especially at this Time, when we have had *so late*, and *so strong* an Example of the Power of the *Nation's Voice*, with respect to the Great, and the Possibility there is, that *popular Dislike* may affect a Man, however strengthened by political Arts, or encircled by a Crowd of *Dependants*.

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There are indeed some who have suggested, that the *People* are very unfit Judges of the Conduct of *Ministers*, because Experience shews that they are very *hard to be pleased*, as on the other Hand it is apparent enough, that the right *Management of public Affairs* is a Point out of their reach, whence it is inferred, that it would be better for them to mind their *private Concerns*. But such Men conclude *too hastily*, the People are far from being unreasonable in their Demands, or insensible of good Usage; on the contrary, they are very ready to bear with *Disappointments* and *Inconveniences*, when they are satisfied of their Governors *good Intentions*, and then as to the *Measure* of their *Understanding*, though it be true that all Men are not *born Politicians*, yet it is not very easy for Folks to live in the World without *feeling*; whence it falls out, that when a Nation is sensibly *distressed*, it will scarce be brought to *believe* that it is *well governed*, nor will Men have any great Heart to attend their *private Concerns*, when their Minds are full of *Doubts* as to the *public Safety*. It would be hard to beat a *Cabin Boy* for not *cleaning his Knives*, when the *Ship* was *sinking*.

Sir *Paul Ricaut*, who was a very agreeable, and at the same time a very sensible Writer, tells us an odd Story of a *Cook* that

was made *Prime Minister* in *Turky*, and behaved very well in his Station. It fell out thus, there was at *Constantinople* so great a Scarcity of Provisions that such as went not to Market early, were in Danger of coming home without a Dinner. This happened one Day to be the Case of a Cook to a Chamber of *Janissaries*, an Accident hindered him from being so soon as usual at the Shambles, and when he came, there was no Meat left. He knew and dreaded the Reception he should meet with at his Return, and fancying that he felt the Cudgel of the Chief of the Chamber about his Shoulders for this Misfortune, he let his Tongue run at a strange Rate. *The Grand Seignior*, said he, *must needs have bad Ministers about him, that things run to this strange Pass, and that in the Capital of so great an Empire, a Man at nine o'Clock shall be at a Loss for a Joint of Mutton, and that with Money in his Hand too. A Plague of such Counsellors say I, now will my Bones suffer for their Faults, with this additional Curse, that for ought I know, I may be next Week in the same Condition.*

As he went thus raving and swearing along the Street, the *Grand Seignior* came by in Disguise, and seeing a Man in so great an Agony, asked him civilly what was the Matter. *Why there it is*, answered the Cook, *I shall get much by telling you the Matter,*

when you have heard it, you'll say I am a poor Dog, and that it is no great Matter, yet none but the Grand Signior can help the Matter; but my Family will loose their Dinner, and I shall be drubbed; confound all evil Counsellors say I. The Sultan still continued to press him to a more particular Explanation, and having at last brought him into a little better Temper, he proceeded in these Words.

Why look you Friend, I am a Cook to a Chamber of Janissaries, I came abroad to-day, it may be half an Hour later than usual, there is not an Ounce of Meat left at the Butchers, I must go home now with my Fingers in my Mouth, and the comfortable News, that for this Day we must fast. The Grand Vizir and his worthy Associates, are so thoroughly employed in enriching themselves, that they have no time to enquire, whether other People have any thing to eat; if I were Vizir, I would undertake to have the Markets well supplied, or be cut into Pound Pieces, and now, what have you got by hearing my Tale, or what am I the better for telling it? Things will still go on thus, till Matters mend above, I tell you as I told you before, no-body but the Grand Seignior can remedy this Grievance, little as it may seem, and so Good b'ye t'ye, I will go take a Beating as patiently as I can.

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The *Grand Signior* returning to his Palace, and considering of the Discourse the *Janizaries Cook* had made him, whether to prove the Abilities of the Man, or because he conceived Providence had offered this Encounter, or that Princes delight to exercise their Power in raising up great Men from nothing, so it was, that he sent immediately for the *Cook*, who being come into his Presence, and sensible of the familiar Discourse he had made him, trembling, cast himself down at his Feet, supposing that the free Language he used of the *Vizier*, and the Government, was the Cause he was now to lose his Life. It happen'd quite otherwise, the Sultan kindly bid him lay aside his Fear, told him, he was resolved to make him *Grand Vizier*, in order to see whither he would keep his Word, and remedy the *Grievances* he had complained of, and that he might not transgress those Customs which are held sacred among the *Turks*, he first made him *Chief* of his *Chamber*, the next Day *Captain*, the Day following *Aga* of the *Janissaries*, and thence at a Step, *Grand Vizier*. A good Minister he proved, no great *Politician* indeed, but to make Amends extremely *honest*, and one that *meant well* to his *Master*, and to the *People*.

Instances of this Sort, are common enough among the *Turks*, and are agreeable to the
Genius

Genius of their Government, which is *tyrannical* and *violent*; a *Minister* who incurs the *Displeasure* of his *Prince*, lives not an *Hour*, and in a *Week's Time* the *Vizier* is destroyed, who is upon *bad Terms* with the *People*. It is the same Thing in other Countries in Effect, tho' the length of Time such *Revolutions* take up alter their Appearance, at least to unattentive Spectators. *Publick Calamities* when they are not brought upon a Nation by *Providence*, are the Result of *Male-Administration*; and to tell the People that this is not *their Affair*, is to tell them a *Falshood*, to bid them not trouble themselves *about it*, is to bid them be *insensible*. The only Remedy in such Cases is a *Change of Measures*, and whenever the *Prince* is wise enough to make such a *Change*, he will certainly have the Goodness to make it known to his Subjects. Their Interests are *his*, he can only be *great* in consequence of their being *happy*; whence it is clear, that unless their *Happiness* be understood and meant by *him* and his *Ministers*, neither he nor they can be *easy*, and this it is that makes a *free People* more likely to be *happy*, than such as live under an *arbitrary Government*; because the former are allow'd to *discuss* this Subject, which must render it more plain and familiar, whereas the latter dare never *talk* about it, so that *Prince* and
People

People may labour whole Ages under the grossest Mistakes.

I could give the Reader an Instance of a *Nation* not in the *Indies*, where the *Monarch* is thoroughly persuaded, that his *Grandeur* consists in the managing the *Affairs* of every other *Kingdom* but his own; that he becomes powerful by sending *great Armies* out of his own *Country*, to be knock'd on the Head in other *People's Quarrels*, and that he is to be a *Gainer* by remitting all the *Money*, that he can *wrap and rend* to Folks, who were never known to refund *half a Crown* since they knew it would fetch *thirty Pence*; and what is still more extraordinary, many of this *King's Subjects*, are content to believe that whatever he accounts his *Glory*, must be their *Felicity*; at which rate of Reckoning, they may be very shortly the *most happy People* in the *World*, without *Bread to eat* or *Clothes to cover* them. Now it is plain, that if they were *free* they could never fall into such *monstrous Errors* as these, nor in Consequence of their falling into them, could they be made the Instruments of *Plague and Punishment* to other *Nations*. It is the Property of *Slaves*, that they are ready to *do*, as well as to *suffer* any thing that comes into their *Master's Heads*, and therefore they are equally dangerous as *Allies* or *Neighbours*, the only Way to be safe from them is to keep them

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at the *Staffs End*, and to use them with as little Ceremony as they meet with from their *Masters*, nay their very Condition requires it.

A miserable Condition this for any People to be in, and yet how far were we from it? *Slavery* did not invade us indeed in a terrifying Manner, we were treated so *gently*, that many apprehended themselves to be in *no Danger*, and laughed at those who thought otherwise. *Lethargies* are as *fatal* as *Convulsions*, and the Patient is in the greatest Danger, when he has the *least Sense* of his *Disease*. We are now to come under *other Hands*, under the *Hands* of *those* who have rescued us from the perilous State we were in, and the Design of this Pamphlet is to shew, what *Treatment* we may expect from them. That we have a right to *speak* upon this Occasion cannot be denied; they have often encouraged us to *speak*, by assuring us that we had such a *Right*. Farther still they have led us by their *own Example*, they spoke what they thought, and so may we; especially if we proceed upon *sound Principles*, on the Maxims of natural Equity, and of our *Antient Constitution*. These are what we ought to glory in defending, and from which we ought to think it *Sacrilege* to *swerve*. But to be particular.

Since

Since we have so lately escaped, so eminent a *Danger*, we cannot provide *too early* against a Return of the *Disease*; when the Body is in an *ill Habit*, a *Dis-temper* is not easily shaken off, it may be *removed* for a time, and recur with *double Violence*; our Business is not to be *weary* of *Physic* too soon, but to be content to use proper Medicines till the *Cure* is perfected. We have shook off our *old Masters* it's true, but this is nothing, if there be any *Danger* left of our having *new ones*, let us eradicate the *Core* of *Slavery*, let all *Tendency* to an *Anti-Constitutional Dependence* be rooted out, this was what we complained of heretofore, and it certainly imports as much that we may never have it to complain of *again*; for should a *Set* of *Men* at any time, arise capable of playing a *back Game*, we are undone, our Manner of *moving* is discovered, the *new Players* would so mind their *Hits*, that we should not soon meet with a *Blot*; to be sure of winning, we must push now before the *Tables are full*. The Case is so clear, it's Importance so great, and so manifest, that nothing can hurt us but our own *Supineness*, if we are *beat* we must be *Bubbles*, for with proper *Attention*, Success may be secured.

The great Point to be aimed at, is the Preservation of our *Liberty*, by removing
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all the Impediments which can hinder the People from *acting freely*, and this, let them arise from what Causes they will. If *Freedom* was once thoroughly *felt*, it would be so generally *understood*, and it's Worth be so *fully known*, that all *Distinctions* of *Party* would be lost, there would not be a Man amongst us to whom the *Thoughts* of *Slavery*, shall I say, no, nor of *Dependance* would be tolerable. We should all move then in our respective *Spheres*, act upon *Principle*, and do what we take to be *our Duty*; whereas, while any Relicks of *Corruption* remain, we shall be governed by *Foreign Impressions*, and be guided like *Machines*, according to the Will and Humour of those in *whose Hands* we are. All who are acquainted with the late and present *State of Politics*, and dare think, and judge for themselves, will know what I say to be true, tho' they may still have their particular Reasons for not owning it, or even for affecting to treat such a Proposition as *wild and chimerical*, or at least *impracticable*. But Experience has shewn us the contrary, the same *Force* which has *thrown off* a *Part* of our *Load*, may throw off *the Rest*, let us adhere firmly to the Constitution in *Church* and *State*; and as for any *Tyes* that our *Fellow Subjects* would impose, let us consider them as ignominious *Badges*, let us disdain to

impose on others, or to be imposed upon ourselves. Amongst a free People all Distinctions are accidental; there is a legal Submission due to Government, which in fact is the Fine we pay for Liberty; if any Attempt to lay more upon our Shoulders, we ought to convince them early of our Mistake, by breaking their Chains in Pieces, and casting their Cords from us.

The People of *Great Britain* may be considered in several *Capacities*, but in whatever *Capacities* they are considered, it may be affirmed that they have a *Right to Liberty*. This they derive from the *Constitution*, and tho' there are particular *Liberties* annex'd to *Property*, yet some there are which belong even to the *meanest*, and which every Man may *claim* who is born a *Briton*. Amongst these I reckon a *Title to Freedom in Speech* and in *Writing*, or in other Words, of *Discourse* and of the *Press*. All are ready enough to *assert this*, when they are angry with *Power*, or think it *ill used*, but the Mischief is, that when Men are *possessed of Power*, they are apt to change their *Opinions*, and against this we ought to be *guarded*; I mean we ought to have this Point *settled*, so as to be free from all *Apprehensions*, especially those under which *our Patriots* have laboured for many Years past.

I would not be understood to be an Advocate for *mobbing* or *railing*, I detest both. But as an ill Use may be made of these *Words*, methinks it would be reasonable, to take away the Possibility of confounding a legal well intended Meeting of the King's Subjects, with a *Riot*, or a free and rational Discourse, with a *Libel*. Let *Sedition* be punished in Actions or in Words, but let us know exactly what *Sedition* is, for otherwise he who *hates* it most may chance to *suffer* for it. I do not pretend to dictate upon this Subject, I know this is not the Business of private Men, but I must confess that I think as Things now stand, we ought to have some *clear* and *explicit Declaration* in Favour of the *Liberty* of the Press, for which I could offer many Reasons, but I will content my self with one. The Use that has been made of the *Press* seems to merit this, by it *Patriots* have been *raised to Power*, and therefore in Gratitude they ought to *exert* their *Power* in its *Favour*. I know but *two* Objections that can be made against this, and I think to each of these I can give a full Answer.

The first is this, that in critical Conjunctions, the *best Government* that can be imagined, may be in Danger from *licentious Writings*, and therefore it ought not to be *expected*, that such as are *intrusted* with the
Government

Government, should countenance any *Law* for farther securing the *Liberty* of the *Press*.

To this I say, that the Objection begs the *Question* ; that no good *Government* can be in Danger from any *Writings* whatsoever ; or supposing it might be in *Danger*, restraining the *Press* is not the *proper Remedy*. Our *Creator* has left our *Thoughts* free, and placed them out of the Reach of *Restraint* from others, which shews, since he is *all wise*, that no kind of *Restriction* on *Sentiment*, is necessary to serve good *Purposes*. If Men write *Falsities* against the *Government*, they may be refuted either in a *legal* or in a *rational* Way, and I am not against either of these *Methods*. But if a Thing cannot be proved either *false* or *mischievous*, I do not think that *publishing* of it ought to be *criminal*. Nor is it clear, that any thing has been got by this. There are *three* eminent Instances of Attempts against the *Liberty* of the *Press*, in our *own Nation*, and very near *our own Times*. The *first* was by the *Prelates* in the Days of *Queen Elizabeth*, *King James*, and *King Charles 1st.* and the End they proposed was quelling of *Puritans*, but instead of succeeding, they threw the Weight of *Popular Pity* into the opposite *Scale*, and thereby made those they persecuted too *heavy* for *themselves*. The *second* Instance was under *Cromwell*: He took it into his Head to gag the *Press*, by prosecuting

secuting *Lilbourne*; but here again, *Power* was defeated, and instead of hindering *Printing*, these violent Measures *encouraged it*. The like happened in the Reigns of *Charles* and *James II.* and has happened ever since, when this Notion of suppressing Papers has prevailed; for it is in *Policy*, what stopping *Secretions* is in *Physick*, a *dangerous* and *empirical Practice*, which throws the bad *Humours* into the *Mass* of *Blood*, and thereby corrupts the *whole Body*. So long as we continue *free*, there can be no Pretence for such a *Conduct*. An Administration cannot be called *good*, that will take Advantage of *idle Suggestions*, nor will be long *esteem'd so*, if they have no other Way of *refuting* such as are *plausible*, but by directing *Prosecutions*.

The *second Objection* is, that there seems to be no Occasion for this, the *Liberty* of the *Press* appearing to be better established at present, than it ever was in this Kingdom; the *Restraints* thereon being general only, and such as may be thought necessary to secure the *Government* from the *Efforts* of such wild and factious *Spirits*, as never can be satisfied with, or easy under any *Administration*.

But when we examine this closely, it will be found a Composition of *Falshood* and *Artifice*. The *Liberty* of the *Press* is at present very precarious, and that which
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is urged to prove it *otherwise*, will, when duly weigh'd, shew it to be *precarious*. If it has been vigorously exercised of late, without meeting with any *Opposition* from *Power*, tho' pointed directly against it, it was owing wholly to the *Weakness* of the *Administration*; the Force of which was worn out, by a long and well-conducted *Opposition*, and the Eyes of the People so effectually opened, that it would not have been easy to have found a *Jury* in any County, capable of acting so contrary to the *Sense* of the *Nation*, as to serve the *Purposes* of a *Prosecution*; but this may not be the Case hereafter, the *Law*, or at least the *Pretence* of the *Law*, stands as it did. There is a certain Treatise, not long since published, a great Part of it printed in a Black-Letter, in Order to make it appear more authentick, and which has been asserted to contain nothing but what is *Law*, and if so, we are just where we were a hundred Years ago. This Book is called, *The Doctrine of Libels*, and in it are all the *Star-Chamber Precedents*, fortified with Abundance of modern Judgments, and this sent by the Direction of a Whig Administration, to prove, I suppose, that Power has a like Effect upon all Minds. At the *Revolution* some Political Reasons were offered, why the *Liberty* of the *Press* should not be declar'd the *Right* of the *Subject*, tho' it was confessed to *be so*. But these Reasons subsist

no longer, the *Temper* of the *Nation* is chang'd, and I dare say there is no body mad enough to believe, that Converts are to be made at this time of Day to *Jacobitism* by Dint of Reasoning. We ought therefore to be made safe and easy in this *great Point*, not by permitting Men to overturn the Principles of Morality and Religion, or of Duty and Submission to the Government by sophistical Writings, but by settling a plain Road in which Folks may walk without Fear; but to say that we are a *free People*, and yet to deny us the *Liberty of Speaking*, when we think that *Freedom* in Danger, is a Sort of *Craft* that will no longer go down, nay, is a Sort of *Craft*, useless to those by whom it is employed, for *Prosecutions* only hinder the timorous or reserv'd from writing, and there are always Men enough of another Cast, who will venture the *Publication* of their *Thoughts*, in spite of any Risque they run. It is therefore better for the *Prince* and *People*, that we should be no longer in the Dark in a Matter of such Importance, but that the Way should be left open, of informing the *Nation*, their *Representatives*, and the *Crown*, of any *Grievances* that are either felt or suspected, because this is the only way to have them examined and removed. To punish Men for *complaining* when they are *injured*, is unnatural as well as unjust,
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and to make them smart for being in the *Vapours*, considering our Clime and Constitution, is somewhat *severe*. There are several kinds of Writings, which are declar'd *criminal* by *Statute*, let these remain so; but as to other Writings, let us not be any longer left to the *Juggle* of a *Jury's* finding the *Publication*, and a Court's inferring *the rest*; but let the *Case of Libels*, like that of *extraordinary Treasons*, be left to the *Judgment of Parliament only*, and then we shall be sure that nothing *really Dangerous* will escape with *Impunity*, and that nothing will be *punished*, contrary to, or beyond its *Deserts*.

If what I have already said, be not sufficient to shew the Necessity of establishing the *Liberty of the Press*, I have something to add that will. The *Case of the Stage* is recent; we all know what was pleaded in Favour of its *Restraint*; we all know what was said *against* it; and what *Consequences* it was said would *follow*, if that *Restraint* took Place. We have seen these *Predictions* strictly and literally fulfilled, *Wit* and *Humour* are no more; we have lost one *great Characteristick* of a *free People*, let us not lose *another* too, lest *Sense* and *Reason* should follow the Track of *Humour* and *Wit*, and the *British Genius* be reduced to the *French*, *Spanish* and *Italian* Employments, of spinning out new *Systems in Philosophy*, or labouring

bouring in Defence of *Tyranny* and *Superstition*. The Reader will easily perceive that this Argument might have been put in a much stronger Light, but the Arts of *fine Writing* are unnecessary in a *fair Cause*; I do not labour to serve the *Purposes of a Party*, but to procure a just Measure of Safety and Security for the *Commons of Great-Britain*, that we may not at every Turn be exposed to short and sharp *Struggles* to secure our *Liberties*, or be obliged to go thro' the *Drudgery* of twenty Years *Opposition* at the Expence of the Wealth and Spirits of the *Nation*, without having the Satisfaction of knowing at the End that we need never undergo this Fatigue *again*.

The next thing I am to take Notice of is *Elections*, on the *Freedom* of which, as the Right Hon. the *Speaker* of the *House of Commons*, on a late solemn Occasion told the Nation, *their Freedom depends*. Hitherto have been enacted *Laws* upon *Laws*, which as yet have had no Effect. It is notorious to all the World, that Numbers of People pretend to undertake and manage *Elections*, it is become a Trade, and there are People not ashamed of acting as *Borough-Brokers*, which is in plain Terms saying, that they *live* or *would live* by *selling their Country*. It is as well known, that Abundance of Arts are used to keep *Places* in a thorough and constant Dependence,

dance, so that the Persons they send to Parliament, are not so properly their *Representatives*, as the *Agents* of such as have *them* in their *Power*. A due Sense of this has made many People think, that the Form of our *Constitution* ought to be altered, at least in this Point. I confess that in my Opinion, this should be the *last Remedy*, because in every *Corporation* there is a *Succession*, and I think it hard that *Posterity* should be deprived of their *Rights*, thro' the *Corruption* of the *present Times*. But if another Remedy is to be applied, we must appear to be *in earnest*, and the People must be convinced, that the *Intent* of the *Legislature* is to extirpate the pernicious Practice of *influencing* the Minds of the *Electors*, by any Method whatsoever. If the least Indulgence be shewn to *one Party*, it will certainly afford a Handle to *the Other*; and therefore the surest way of curing this Evil, is to strike at all the Methods of influencing yet known, by providing, that if there be any *Expence* at *Elections*, the *Electors* and not the *Candidates* should bear it; as also that *Members* should *purge* themselves of all *Suspicion* of *Corruption*, as they do of *Disloyalty* and *Popish Principles*, when they take their *Seats*. I am sensible that I go too far, and therefore I will stop short, but I hope the *Honesty* of my *Intention* will atone for

any unguarded *Expression*; and that my Zeal for the *Honour* of *Parliament* will excuse my speaking so plainly on so nice a Subject, the rather, because *Doctrines* of a different kind have been artfully and industriously spread among the People, whereby their Notions, as to this Point, have been so *unsettled*, that they have come to consider *Elections* in every Light, but that in which alone they ought to be considered. The time I hope is come when these *Delusions* will be expos'd, and the *Commons* of *Great-Britain* will be brought to apprehend, that the most solemn, sacred, and important *Action* of their whole Lives is giving their *Votes* at an *Election*, and that therefore they ought to come prepared in another Manner, than that which has been for *many Years* too common; for till this is brought about, the *End* never can be answered. People hot, and scarce in their Senses, are not likely to act upon *Principles*, and all *Laws* must needs be ineffectual among such as have *no Consciences*. Unfashionable Language this, but fit and proper, because I combat a *fashionable Folly*, which has induced even Persons of Rank, of Parts and of Probity to believe, that Men heated with *Liquor*, or drunk with *Passion* or *Prejudice*, are in a Condition good enough to give their *Votes*, where their *own* and their *Country's* Safety stands immediately

ately concerned, whether more to our *Shame*, or to our *Detriment* as a *Nation*, would be a Point hard to determine.

The *Place-Bill* is another Matter of infinite Consequence, and indeed, when the People are so willing to be restrained from doing themselves *Mischiefs* in their *Elections*, it seems to be but a reasonable *Request*, that they should be secured as far as may be in their Members, by a Provision that too many of them may not have *more to do* than is consistent with the *Service* they owe their *Country*. I own, that on the other Side, abundance of plausible Things may be said upon this Head, more I think than upon any other; and yet when we examine them to the bottom, we find that most of these are *Arguments*, founded in *Authority* rather than *Reason*; instead therefore of answering such, I shall offer a few short, but cogent *Motives* for the passing of this *Law*, and leave them to the Consideration of the Reader.

In the first Place, such a *Law* seems to be necessary to prevent abundance of *Aburdities*, for while *Place-Men* have *Seats* in the *House*, it frequently happens that a *Servant* sits as *Judge* upon his *Master*; an *Officer* decides on the Obedience which the *military Power* owes to the *civil Magistrate*, and People obey in one Capacity what they are said to *direct* in another. It is impossible

possible not to discern at first Sight that these are *Incongruities*, which Disorder the *Frame*, and very possibly may sometime or other affect the very *Being* of our *Constitution*. It is therefore extremely fit they should be removed, as in some Cases it has been confessed, and a Remedy applied, and by what Rule *those* that remain were distinguished from *the rest*, is, I think, hitherto untaught us by any of our *professed Politicians*.

The *Mischief* complained of is a *Novelty*, notwithstanding all that has been said of the Respect paid to the *Crown* in former Times. If we consider the *Parliaments* before the *Restoration*, we shall find but a Handful of *Place-Men* in them, and even those *Place-Men* such as we do not desire should be deprived of *Seats*. The multiplying of *Places* began after the *Revolution*, when instead of the great *Officers* of the *Crown*, we came to have *Business* done by *Colleges* or *Boards*, which some penetrating People have thought a *Change* neither honourable nor beneficial, for when a *Treasurer* or an *Admiral* did any Thing amiss, the *Error* was easily traced to its *Author*, and the *Commons* knew how, and from whom, to obtain Satisfaction; but the Thing is quite otherwise now, to discover where the *Blame* lies is not so easy, and to fix a Charge upon any *particular Person*, is almost impracticable.

cable. One sees therefore that in this *Light* there can be nothing more reasonable, than to recur to our *first Principles*, and bring Things back to their *antient Standard*, that our *Parliaments* like the *Parliaments* of *old*, may be the Support of the *Crown*, and the Refuge of the *People*.

Add to all this, that since the Method of bestowing of *Places* on the *Members* of the *House of Commons*, first came in Use, it has been a *growing Evil*, and tho' it be true, that there is a *legal Provision* against their possessing any late created *Offices*, yet it has been evident enough, that for a long Series of Time past, every Year has produced *new Places*, which by the Help of proper Changes, have been converted into *Gratifications*. The best Way therefore to give a Check to this *Grievance*, and to spare that mighty Effusion of *Public Money*, which has been squandered on *unprofitable Servants*, is to lessen the Number of *Place Men* in the *House of Commons*, for it will be found that when Men have no *Places*, nor can have them, they will be less ready to create them for *other People*. One might add Abundance of Things to strengthen this *Argument*, but that they are for many Reasons unnecessary, especially for this, that every *Reader*, who will take the *Trouble* of weighing Matters seriously with himself, will discover so many *Ways* of applying what has
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been already said, that there will be no Danger of his not apprehending a PLACE-BILL the most effectual Remedy for creating burdensome and unnecessary Offices, perhaps a proper Introduction to the suppressing many, with which we are *loaded already*.

It is likewise plain that Persons *have not Time* to perform suitably, and successfully, what is required of them in double Capacities. A Man cannot be in *two Places* at once, which seems to be a good Reason why he should not take upon him *Characters* that interfere with *each other*; and which consequently put him under an absolute Necessity of neglecting *one*, if not *both*. The *Service* of the *House* is in a Manner certain, both as to *Time* and *Place*, with what Propriety then can a Man accept a *Post*, which he knows *may*, nay probably *will*, require his *Attendance* at the same time in some other Place? We have been told by such as defend *this Practice*, that *Placemen* are the *People's Servants*; it is not therefore easy to understand, how a Man that takes upon him to *represent* his Country in Parliament, can reconcile to himself taking *Wages* from his *Country*, for other *Services* which he does not *perform*; or if he earns his *Wages*, how he can be satisfied as to the *Safety* of his *Country*, which at any time *may*, and very frequently has depended upon a *single Vote*. In this Respect too the

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Conduct of *Senators* has a great Influence on the *People*, they seldom scruple to follow their *Examples*; and for this Reason the greatest Care should be taken not to mislead them into a Notion, that the *public Money* may be *innocently taken* without earning, or the *public Service* neglected without a *Crime*: But if this be in the Nature of Things at all Times requisite, it is much more so in an Age like this, when it is but too evident that Men are very lax in their Notions, and are willing to lay hold even of the *slightest Pretences* to excuse themselves from a strict Performance of their *Duty*.

I beg leave to subjoin one other *Motive*, which will perhaps appear more conclusive than the rest; I mean the *Authority* of several *great* and *glorious Patriots*, who have maintained this *Doctrine* for many Years past, and, who without doubt are fixed in this *Opinion* still. Should we suppose them capable of altering it, such *Consequences* would follow as I abhor the Thoughts of; we should be then at a Loss how to know certainly what is *right* or *wrong*; we should begin to doubt of *our* past *Conduct* and *theirs*, at least we should find it very difficult to satisfy ourselves, whether they were *right* before or are so *now*, which might prove prejudicial to *them* and to *ourselves*. But the *Supposition*

is *groundless*, and to insist upon it would be indecent, we may rest satisfied that such as have heretofore *supported* the *Place-Bill*, against all the Influence of *Power*, will now use all their *Power* to secure the passing of the *Place-Bill*, in Case any Arts should be practised or Opposition formed to prevent it. This to be sure will give the People the highest Satisfaction, and bring them for once to believe that *Places* cannot alter *Patriots*, but that Men truly attached to the *Service* of their *Country* are the same in *Public*, as in *private Stations*, and incapable of being *biased* in either.

A more *favourable Juncture* than this there cannot be for the *passing* such a *Law*. The Expedience, the Necessity of it have so *lately appeared*, that no Imputation can be fixed on the the *Earnestness* with which People *expect* it ; as on the other hand, the Reputation of some who have lately acquired *Places* is so perfectly unblemished, that the Demand of it can be no Reflection upon their *Administration* ; but on the other side, if we should be now deceived in our Hopes, if by any Accident, any Oversight, this *Bill* should be *lost* (I suppose the Thing only, for it can never happen) we must for ever *despair*, so fair an Opportunity we can hardly imagine will ever be had again, and of a *fairer* we can form no Idea. I take it then for granted, that the best Law that can be con-

trived for this Purpose will speedily be given us, that all our Fears and Apprehensions in this respect will be quite taken away, that *national Councils* being freed from this *dead Weight*, will act with more *Dignity*, as well as greater *Alacrity*, and that the People in consideration of so great a Blessing, will address themselves with the utmost Ardour to the *Service* of the *Publick*, esteeming nothing a *Hardship*, that an *Independant Parliament* shall think fit to impose upon them, for restoring the *Reputation* of *Britain*, the long lost *Balance* of *Power*, and the *Freedom* of *Europe*, all of which might otherwise have been thought *desperate*.

The *Restoration* of *triennial* Parliaments is another thing which the People cannot but *expect*, because they must be perfectly satisfied that they cannot be *safe* or *free* without it. This has been so strongly *proved* to them, and *asserted* by Persons of such Weight and Character, that it never can depart from their *Thoughts* till it be accomplished, in *Fact* till they are restored to one of the *greatest Blessings* they derived from the *Revolution*, and which when it was taken from them, was taken by *Surprise*; was taken as an Expedient to serve a *pressing Occasion*, for nothing could have brought them to endure *Septennial* Parliaments, but the Apprehension of another

thorough Change in the *State*, which very possibly might have ended in their having *no Parliament at all*. To dwell ever so little even on the most important Arguments which have been offered, to shew the Necessity of restoring this *salutary Law*, would take up a whole *Treatise*, and surely to very little Purpose, considering that the People are already *convinced*, and that they in some Measure owe that *Conviction* to the Reasonings of *Persons in Power* on this Subject. I shall content, myself therefore, with hinting a *few things* that seem to shew it ought not to be *delayed* or *postponed*.

It seems to be not a little odd to call a *Parliament*, the *Nation's Representative*, and yet to continue them by *Law* beyond that *Period*, for which the *People* incline to *chuse* them. One may venture to say, that there is not a County, a City, or a Borough throughout *Great Britain*, where the *Electors* have not shewn a Dislike to *Septennial Parliaments*, and a Desire to have their *Old Rights* return again into their Hands. Neither ought this to be stiled a fond and factious, but rather a just and natural *Desire*, for as Princes do not readily bear with Encroachments on *Prerogative*, so it cannot be supposed that the People will tamely submit to any *Diminution* of their *Freedom*, especially when they consider
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the *bad* Consequences that have, and the much *more dangerous* Consequences that may attend it. Hence arises that *universal Demand* of the *Repeal* of the *Septennial Act*, and hence in my Judgment, arises the clearest and most cogent *Argument* that can be offer'd for it. The *People* for whose *Benefit* Government was instituted, the *People* of *Great Britain*, who long ago were allowed to have a *Right* to *triennial* Parliaments, this *People* who have experienced the *Loss* of that *Right*, unanimously *wish* and *desire* that they may *enjoy* it *again*; can there be any thing more fit, than that the wise and worthy *Patriots* of the *present Age*, should secure their *Affections* by granting them this Demand?

The *Repeal* of the *Septennial Act*, will be a natural Consequence of the Care taken to prevent *Corruption* in *Elections*, and the unreasonable *Bias* derived to *Members* from a *Multitude* of *Places*. When these Obstacles are removed, all the *Pretences* that ever were alledged in Favour of *Septennial* Parliaments will be taken away; for if *Bribery* and *Confusion* can be excluded at the *Choice* of *Members*, as surely they may, then there need be no Apprehension of the *frequent Returns* of *Elections*; they will be as *peaceable*, as it is to be hoped they are no less *useful* and *necessary* Assemblies, than *Affizes* and *Quarter-Sessions*; the Frequency of
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which was never yet thought a *Grievance*. Farther still, if but a moderate Number of *Placemen* have *Seats* in the *House*, and if it be, as it has been often strongly asserted, a *Hardship* on Gentlemen to be render'd incapable of *Publick Trusts*, by the People's *Choice* of them for *Representatives*; then it is plain, that the only *Way* to *remedy* this *Evil*, is to restore *triennial* Parliaments; for an Incapacity of *three* Years, will be surely a less Mischief than an Incapacity for *seven*. Nay, by this Means, the People's *Choice* may recommend their *Members* to *Places*, without Prejudice to their *Constituents*; for when a Gentleman has *served* with Attention, Steadiness and Integrity, *one* or *two* Parliaments, the People ought not, nor will they grudge, if they see him all the *rest* of his *Life* in *Office*. But if on the other hand, we consider an *Election* to *Parliament*, in the Light of an honourable, but *burthensome* Duty, in which it may be well considered, then it must be confessed, that an *Election* for *seven* Years is a very great *Hardship* on *Members*; such a *Hardship*, as may very probably deter Men who are best qualified, from accepting the *Office*.

It must likewise occur to every Man of Reflection, that till we have this Security, other Alterations will be of *little Consequence*. The Iniquity of *private Persons* bartering away their *Votes* may be prevented,

vented, the Power of the Crown in bestowing Places on Members of Parliament may be limited, but still the Inconveniencies suspected, nay and felt too from *septennial* Parliaments, will not be sufficiently provided against. The Continuance, the unnecessary Continuance, I was going to say, the unwilling Continuance of so great a Trust for so long a Time, is a thing justly to be feared. Corruption we know is as subtle and ingenious, as it is bold and enterprising; if therefore we would secure ourselves effectually against its Attempts on the Constitution, let us take away this powerful Temptation to it, for it is allowed, that when a Parliament is to last for three Years only, it cannot answer the Ends of Corruption, and must therefore in all probability escape it. It is true some Inconveniencies may attend the Repeal of the *Septennial Act*, tho' I must confess I do not foresee them; but if there should, it is time enough to think of them when they appear. There never was any System of human Contrivance absolutely free from Difficulties, and therefore if they should occur here, they ought not to discredit this Measure more than any other, neither ought we to despair of finding Remedies for them. The Case in Fact is this, that the Mischiefs attending another Situation, are too well known and too deeply experienced. This is the Case

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in fact, I say, which demands our *immediate Notice* ; and as to the *Case in view*, it must be allowed not the best alone, but the only *Cure* that can be thought of, even tho' it was exposed to some Inconveniency, therefore the People in general *desire* to have it applied.

As soon as these *Regulations* shall take *Place*, the Nation will be delivered from all rational *Jealousies*, as to the Safety of the *Constitution* ; Parliaments will be restor'd to that *Reverence* and *Authority*, which they had amongst our *Ancestors* ; and which, from a Prospect of these *Benefits*, we already pay to the *Parliament in Being* ; after this, private Men will no longer concern themselves, as they have done, in cavassing *publick Affairs*, but will return to the Care of their domestic Concerns, from a thorough Confidence, that all things relating to *Government* are in a *right Channel*. To this desirable Condition, may the *Business* of our *State* be brought by these few and easy Amendments, which are render'd requisite through the Injuries done by *Time* and *Accident* to the Frame of our *Government*, which *human Foresight* perhaps could not prevent, but which *human Industry* may certainly remove, otherwise it would be in vain to enquire or talk about them. The *Effects* of these *Disorders* first made them the *Subject* of *publick Discourse* ; and
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since then the *Remedies* here mentioned, have been the Result of every *grand Consultation*. If therefore Experience, Reason and Authority have any *Weight*, if what we know ourselves, or what we learn from History can afford us any *Direction*, then we have all the Reason in the World to hope, that by having a due Respect to the *Freedom of Elections*, by a just and moderate *Restraint of Place-Men* in the *House of Commons*, and by restoring the People to their *Right* of electing once in *three Years* a *new Representative*, we shall put an end to all the *Fears* and *Jealousies* that have so long subsisted amongst us, establish our *Liberty* on a Foundation not to be shaken, and thereby fill the *People* with those warm and vigorous Sentiments of *Zeal* for the *Publick*, which *Liberty* only can inspire.

There are indeed some other things which very nearly concern the *Interest* of the *Publick*, and which we can have no Doubt will be immediately *taken Care of*; I will mention a *few*. The *publick Debts* have been a long and heavy Burthen on the People, a great Incitement to *Luxury*, or at least to *Idleness*, by providing a safe and *certain Income* for the most *indolent*, and consequently the most *useless* Part of *Society*, and a great Discouragement to *Industry* and *Trade*, because this *Income* of theirs arises

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from the *Labour* of *others*. Yet long and heavy as this Burthen is, I own it to be, and I hope it will be always thought, a just and necessary *Burthen*, till such time as we are able to *pay it*. But the Mischief is, that some *Arts* have been used to persuade us, that *paying of it* is a thing that will not be *soon thought of*, nor have Endeavours been wanting on the other Hand to possess us with an Opinion, that perhaps a *quick Payment* thereof may not be our *Interest*. No Wonder then, while such *odd Suggestions* were flying about, that the People might be much disturbed in their Minds with *Apprehensions* on this Subject, especially when they heard those who could agree in nothing else clear in this, that it was a *Matter of great Perplexity*, and of which, *Folks of ordinary Understanding* could not be Judges. A little Consideration might possibly convince them of the Truth of this last Assertion, in respect to the *Circumstances of paying the National Debt*; but as to the *two* great Points of its not being the *Interest* of the *Government* or the *People*, to set still patiently under this *Load*, they could not possibly be under any *Doubts* about them.

For first in respect to the Government. It would be impossible to impose it on Men of common Sense, though altogether unacquainted with Funds, that a *wise* and
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well-meaning Administration should think it their *Interest* to keep the Nation under such a *Load* of *Debt*, without ever thinking of Means to *relieve* it. The barely suggesting this, would sufficiently imply, that the *Government* had a different *Interest* from the *People*; and that therefore they were content to let such a *Load* rest upon them, that they might render them the more *tractable* and *easy* to be *managed*. To speak the *Truth*, and why should we conceal it? this was the very Reason offered to support so strange a *Paradox* in *Politicks*. But tho' it might be a *Reason* which some Men would chuse to *act* on, it was such a *Reason*, as the wickedst Ministry we ever had durst never *avow*. It was a *Reason* that fully proved a *good Government* never could have any Intention of continuing the *Burthen* of *Publick Debts*, longer than it was absolutely necessary, because such a *Government* would expect not the *Service* only, but the *Affections* of the *People*. In short, this *Maxim* might do well enough amongst *Slaves*, or might suit the Intentions of Men who *sought* to *make Slaves*, but could never enter the Hearts of any who inclined to *leave* their Countrymen *free*.

Then as to the *Interest* of the *Nation* it was impossible, let the Subject be ever so mysterious, that any *Sophism* should be-

get a Doubt, whether we were not the *worse* for owing a *vast Debt*, and paying a *large Interest* for it. The plausible Pretence that this inclined *Foreigners* to *trust* their *Money* here, so that we were really the richer for what we owed, might *console* us a little while, which we are obliged to be in *Debt*, but could never *satisfy* us that we were the *better* for it, or that we should be *less Wealthy* for owing *nothing*. It is very true, that Men well acquainted with *Figures*, having different Apprehensions of *some Things*, from what others have who are less *versed* in *Numbers*, but does it follow from thence that any *Skill* in *Accounts* can bring a Man to believe that a *Debt* is *no Burden*, if so I would boldly pronounce such a *Skill* to be of *no Use*? But the contrary is true, such as understand *Figures* best, see this Matter in quite another Light, and have enabled us to shew the *Fallacy* of that *Argument*, even to the most *ordinary Understanding*. If *Foreigners* trust us with their *Money*, it must be because they can make *more* of it here than they can *at home*, and if so, then we have just Reason to apprehend that we pay *more* for their *Money* than it is *worth*, or to speak in softer Terms more than we can *afford*, the End of which must be *beggaring* ourselves and *cheating* them, for we can only pay them Interest
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so long as our *Money lasts*, and when they come to *lose the Principle*, they will think themselves *hardly dealt with*, whatever the *Interest* may be which they have *received*. To make this plainer and put the thing out of Dispute. We know that the *Dutch* are *great Proprietors* in our *publick Funds*. But the *Dutch* are a trading Nation, a Nation careful of their *Interest*, and who are well known seldom to make a *rash*, hardly ever a *wrong Judgment*, in *Affairs* of this Sort. We must therefore conclude that they consider this Method of employing their Money as a *Kind of Trade*, and all Circumstances, all Hazards considered, a *beneficial Kind of Trade*, otherwise they would not employ such large Sums therein. But if it be *advantageous to them*, how can it be *so to us*? their *Profit* must arise from drawing *more* from our *Funds*, than they could do from their *own Commerce*, but we know that our *Trade* is not driven at so *small an Expence*, or with such *high Advantages* as the *Dutch*, and therefore we may be satisfied if we will be satisfied of any thing that they *gain*, and we *lose* by this Confidence which they repose in us. We may apply this *Reasoning* to *other Cases*, and be from thence convinced that the *public Debt* is a *real*, not an *imaginary Grievance*, tho', as I said before, it is a *Burden* that must be *taken off by Degrees*,

grees, and not thrown down in a *Pett*, tho' it may be *troublesome* to bear.

But it may be objected, if the Case be so clear, how comes it to pass that so many *able Men*, who seem to have understood this Subject, have been of a *different Opinion*, or what Reason is there to suppose that *you* are more *infallible* than *they*? To this I think I can give a very satisfactory Answer. The *national Debt* is swollen to so immense a *Bulk*, that a very *considerable Part* of the *Nation*, are so far interested therein, as to desire that it should *not* be esteemed a *Burden*, or at least not so great a *Burden* as it *really is*. Now among these People there are many who are *Men* of great *Skill* in *Figures* and in *Arguments*; and therefore we need not wonder that they employ their *Skill*, as most *People* do, for the Furtherance of their *particular Interest*, without having a due Respect to *that* of the *Publick*. We know what an *Outcry* was made against the *Scheme* of that truly disinterested Patriot, Sir JOHN BARNARD, and yet there is nothing clearer, nothing more certain, than that this was an *Outcry* of *Part* of the *Nation* against the *Whole*, an *Outcry* made by such as were maintained by, or were raising *Fortunes* out of the *publick Debt*, against the *Interest* of the *whole People* of *Great Britain*, who bend under the

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Weight of it. This therefore solves the Difficulty, this shews how we are come to have a *potent Party* amongst us in Favour of the *publick Debt*, nay, it shews more, it shews us that if the *public Debt* should grow still *greater* than it is, the *Party* who are for it would grow *stronger*, and when this is maturely weighed, it will appear a very *alarming Argument* against the Continuance of such a *Burden*. But blessed be God, we have the *Prospect* of an *immediate Remedy*, I mean the *Bill* lately brought into Parliament for appointing *Commissioners* to state the *publick Debts*, this shews a true *Spirit of Patriotism*, and is sufficient to convince us, that we shall at last see what the Circumstances of the Nation *really are*, and then perhaps it will not be so difficult a Matter, even for private Men, to contrive a *Method* for a just, speedy, and effectual *Removal* of this *grievous Load*; but I have dwelt too long upon this *Point*, and must therefore be the shorter upon *Others*.

The regulating of our *Taxes* would be a Work of great *Utility* to the *Publick*, for next to taking them off it is certain, there could be no greater *Ease* given to the *Subject* than laying them *equally*, since there can be no just Reason assigned, why one part of his Majesty's Subjects should bear *more* in this Respect than another. Every
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Body knows the Hardships that attend the *Window Tax*, which is so contrived, that it affects an industrious *Weaver* more than the *richest Peer*. There are abundance of Inconveniencies in the *Management* of the *Excise*, more in the *Customs*, but most of all in the *Land-Tax*, which, tho' it might be the fairest, is, and ever has been, the *hardest* and most *unequal Tax* that is levied upon the People, since at the same time that *four* Shillings in the *Pound* is paid to the full in *London*, the Inhabitants of the *North* and *West* do not pay above *one*, or between *one* and *two* at most. If this Mischief was taken away, a *Land-Tax* of *two* Shillings would produce as much as *four* does now; which, tho' it would be the same thing to the *Publick*, yet it is plain that *half* the *private People* would be relieved who pay this *Tax*, and the *other half* could not justly complain, since they would then pay *no more* than they ought.

It would be also a very commendable as well as acceptable Work, to regulate the *Laws* relating to the *Poor*, so that they might be maintained like *Englistmen* and *Christians*, yet with such Oeconomy, that paying for their Maintenance, might not contribute to bring *others* into their Condition. Something to this Purpose was *talked of* in the first Session of the *last* Parliament, and if I mistake not, the Heads of a Bill were

were drawn up, whereby the several *Acts* relating to this *Matter*, would have been reduced to *one general Law*; but as I observed this was in the *first Sessions*, and nothing more was heard of it to the *last*, which certainly was but too generally remarked by the People, who expect to feel the Hands of their Representatives, in *easing* as well as *imposing Burthens*. Nor would it be an improper Addition to this Care, if some Methods were taken for preventing the *Increase* of our *Poor*, by restraining such iniquitous Professions, as have a visible Tendency to multiply Beggars, such as *Pawn-Brokers, Tally-Men, Tipling-Houses, Geneva-Shops*, and all other Receptacles of idle and debauched Persons, which have been carried on for many Years past, with such shameless, or rather shameful Impunity, that *Foreigners*, from a *View* of our *Corruption*, might doubt whether we had any *Government* at all. I hope it will not be thought a Crime in me to mention, on such an Occasion as this, what our *Grand Juries* have so often, tho' to so little Purpose complained of, when things are not reached by *ordinary Courts*, which yet are highly detrimental to the Publick, the *Parliament* is the sole Resource of the People, and to it every Man may *resort*.

The Repeal of obsolete or useless *penal Laws*, would be an *Act* of great *Justice*

in itself, and of much *Benefit* to the *People*. It is notorious that these are now multiplied to such a Degree, as that it would require Volumes to comprehend them. Some are arbitrary, some contradictory, and numbers of them unreasonable, which is the Cause that many remain unexecuted, tho' in some Respect this too may prove *detrimental* to the *People*, since in many Cases it is equally unreasonable to *punish* beyond Measure, or absolutely to *pass by* an *Offence*. One great Source of these Evils has been a modern Principle, of adverting rather to the *Interest* of the *Revenue* than the *Service* of the *Nation*; whence it has come to pass, that *Laws* have been exerted or suffered to *sleep* at the Discretion of *Officers*, which is a thing entirely repugnant to our *Constitution*, this making *Laws* the *Masters* of *Men*, and that giving to *Men* a Power over the *Laws*. One cannot imagine that such a Regulation as this should be instantaneous; no, as Mischiefs discover themselves *gradually*, so there must be time taken to *root them out*; but if the great *Council* of the *Nation*, would have the Condescension to appoint a *Committee* to enquire into the Number, Nature and Consequences of the *penal Laws*, it would give us Hopes, that in some reasonable Space, they would be digested into such Order, as might render

them no longer *terrible*, but *salutary* to the *Subject*, which certainly would be a great and happy Change.

There is indeed *one* of these *Laws*, which deserves to be particularly mentioned, because it is among the Number of the reputed *Causes* of our *intestine Divisions*. The *Law* I mean is the *Test Act*, for the repealing of which several fruitless Attempts have been made, and tho' no body would be better pleased to see it *repealed* than I, yet I own that I am very well pleased they were *fruitless*. The known Motive to these Attempts, was the *Dispute* subsisting between the *late Ministry* and the *Opposition*; and if in such a Situation of Things, the *Repeal* of the *Test Act* had been carried, it might have revived our *religious Fars*, and been the Means of perpetuating *Dissentions*. But those Times are now over; Men are restored to the free Use of their *Reason*, in *publick* as well as *private Capacities*, and therefore this surely is the fittest Time for removing such a *stumbling Block* of *Offence*, and for restoring to us as *Christians* that *Liberty*, which seems to be the *Birth-Right* of *Britons*. This is so just, so equitable, so rational a Demand, that it stands not in Need of *Party Assistance*, as on the other Hand we have now *just Grounds* to hope, it will never more be opposed through *Party Influence*. The

Reasons in Favour of this *Step* have been so often so unanswerably stated, that it might well be dispensed with, if in so short a Tract as this, I took them for granted; but as I have put the Matter upon a *fair Issue*, and entirely disengaged it from *Party*, I think it may not be amiss to offer a *few Arguments* in support of my *Assertion*, that *all Parties* ought to think this Measure *right*.

In the first Place, such a Distinction as this *Act* makes, is contrary to *natural* and to *Gospel Liberty*, and is of the Nature of those *Impositions*, which have the worst Effect on the Minds of Men. It occasions an idle and needless Distinction, between their *civil* and *religious* Interests; leads to Hypocrisy, Indifference, Want of Consideration, Contempt of Divine Things, and so to *downright Atheism*. For when once Men have got over *Doubts*, they come to leaping over *Principles*, as woeful Experience has convinced us; for the more *Oaths*, the more *Declarations*, the more *Subscriptions* have been required amongst us, the less we have of Conscience and Christianity, and the more *Libertinism* has prevailed. It is plain, therefore, that upon this Topic, *Believers* and *Unbelievers* must agree; according to the *Notions* of the former, it must be held a *dishonourable Distinction*; and on the *Principles* professed by the latter, it appears to be

be *unchristian*, and *irreligious*. The sole Pretence is, that the *Test* is the *Bulwark* of the *Church*; but sure no Man who is a *Christian* indeed, thinks that the *Church* of God will be endangered, by ruining any of the *Fortifications* Men have raised in its *Defence*. This is both an *impious* and a *senseless* Position when strictly considered, however plausible it may seem, when dressed out by Masters of *Logic* and *Rhetoric*, who are able to give an Absurdity the *Colour* of *Truth*, and raise an enthusiastic *Spirit* of *Violence*, in support of any Cause.

Next, I say, that sincere and conscientious *Churchmen* have given this up long ago; they are thoroughly convinced, as indeed every considerate Man must be, that the *Test Act* is a Civil Establishment, whereby a *divine Institution* is perverted to a *prophane Use*, which must affect every *honest*, every *pious* Mind with *deep Concern*; the rather, because it is evident, that instead of reconciling *Dissenters* to the *Church*, this is a great Cause why many are *Dissenters* still, who scruple Compliance when enjoined, and yet would have *no Doubts* about it, if it were *not so*. The truest Friends to the *Church*, are certainly such as are attached to it, from an attentive Consideration of its Principles, and a sincere Persuasion that they are agreeable to the *Will* of God; but these Men are as much offended with

with the *Test Act* as the *Dissenters*, desire as much to see it repealed, and think their own Deliverance from the *Sin* and *Shame* of prostituting the *blessed Sacrament*, would be as great as theirs. The Pretence therefore that the *Repeal* of this *Law* would prejudice the *Church*, if we take that Word in its spiritual and proper Sense, is not only idle and vain, but also absolutely repugnant to Truth. The *Church of England*, as a *Society of Christians*, have no Interest in the *Test Act*; on the contrary, they really are, and many have confessed as much under Obligations to get this *Scandal* speedily removed. But it may be said, that the *Church* is to be considered not only as a *Christian*, but an *established Church*, and therefore entitled to defend its *religious Rights*, by the *Means* thought most proper by the *Civil-Power*. This is the last Resource, and to this I think *two* very satisfactory Answers may be given; satisfactory I mean to such as incline to be *satisfied*; for as to Men who dispute with a *settled Purpose* of never parting with their *own Opinions*, it is a vain thing to talk of *satisfying* or *convincing* them. But to the Point,

First, tho' it be allowed that an *established Church* may use the Means prescribed by *Civil Authority* for its Defence, yet this must be in things *lawful* upon *Christian*

Non Principles, and the Method prescribed by the *Test Act*, is acknowledged not to be of this Number, even by such as are zealous for preserving it; and who, therefore, according to their *own Arguments*, ought rather to think of a proper *Equivalent*, than absolutely persist in demanding as they do its *Continuance*. But *secondly*, this is not all, tho' the *Dissenters* are politically within the *Construction* of this *Act*, yet it is certainly against the *Spirit* of it, to put them under its *Penalties*. The *Fact* is notorious that the *Intent* of the *Legislature*, in making this *Law*, was to secure the *Protestant Religion*, and therefore to turn the Edge of it upon *Protestants*, is a thing very irreconcilable to that *Spirit* of *Meekness* and *Sincerity*, which is essential to *true Religion*. I would therefore propose it as a fair Question, to the *Advocates* for the *Continuance* of this *Law*, whether such a Proceeding does not argue an *Attachment* rather to a *political* than *ecclesiastical Establishment*; and whether it is not betraying the *Christian*, or at least the *Protestant Religion* to its capital Enemies, for the sake of *Interest*, thus to postpone *Principles*. I would not be understood to argue either against the *established Church*, or in Favour of *Sectaries*, farther than is necessary to their *Toleration*; but since I think it is clear that the *Test* is a Hardship on the *Lay-*
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Dissenters, and on the *Clergy* of the *Church* of *England*, I must also think it ought to be taken away for the Ease and by the Consent of *both*, such an *equivalent Security* being first agreed on, as may answer the end of the *Test* by some *lawful Means*.

The Care of our *Manufactures* is a Point not to be *passed* over; to say the Truth, it is a Point that will admit of no *Delay*. Our Negligence in this Respect has been *too great* already; and most evident it is, that we suffer by it grievously, and must continue to suffer by it *more and more*, till it is thoroughly leached into and effectually *redressed*. Tho' it must be allowed, that Complaints for *Want* of *Money* have been common in *all Ages*, yet it cannot be denied, that at present they are *remarkably just*. There is a real *Stagnation* of *Trade*, which is too sensibly *felt* to be *disputed*. our *staple Commodities* hang upon our *Hands*; and *Numbers* of *People*, who were wont to get their *Bread* by their *Labour*, now expect *Alms*. Such a Change as this is not only prejudicial, but scandalous to a *Nation*, because it is an evident Proof that we have neglected our *Affairs*, and have made little or no Use of the *mighty Advantages* afforded us by *Providence*. It is therefore high time to look about us, if we are concerned either for our *Honour* or for our *Interest*; Petitions upon Petitions come from all the
Place.

Places where *Trade* was wont to flourish, complaining of its *Decay*, and of the *Discouragements* it labours under. Neither does the *Malady* stop here, but like a *Gangrene*, spreads from the *trading* to the *landed Interest*, makes our *Rents* fall, and all *Property precarious*. If therefore we continue to turn a *deaf Ear* to all the *Remonstrances* made upon this Subject, or to behave towards them with such *Indifference*, as if they were Things that might be looked into at *any time*; we shall be like Men of *large Fortunes* and *larger Expences*, who trouble not themselves about *Debts* or *Incumbrances*, till their *Estates* are so affected thereby, that *Care* comes *too late*, and *Oeconomy* is to *no Purpose*.

The Affair of *WOOL*, and *WOOLLEN MANUFACTURES*, has been for many Years canvassed in *general Discourse*, and has now and then occupied the Attention of a *great Assembly* for a *little while*; I wish it was absurd to say, and to *little Purpose*. By this sort of Management the thing is now grown so *perplexed*, and at the same time *concerns* us so *nearly*, that we are at a loss *what Course* to take, and yet almost *any* would be preferable to taking *no Course* at all. In such a Case, *Circumspection*, *Labour* and *Attention* are necessary; the thing must be examined into by proper *Judges*; *Enquiries* must be made in a pro-

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per Manner of, and by proper Persons; Stories must not be taken upon Trust, or Projects received in Virtue rather of *Recommendations* than *Reasons*. All Mens Opinions should be *asked*, and such as appear most rational should be *followed*. All this cannot be dispatched by a few Hours Attendance *twice* in a Week for a *Month* together; no, it will require a cooler and more considerate Method, that is to say, if despising Expedients, we resolve to *settle* the *Matter* on a right Foundation, to preserve our *Wool* at *home*, to provide for its being *manufactured* here and vended *abroad*, as heretofore was wont and may be again, if we are not wanting to ourselves, which has been *too often* our Misfortune.

It may also deserve Enquiry how far the *Exportation* of *raw Commodities*, the *Increase* or *Improvement* of *Manufactures* already set up, or the establishing *new Ones*, may be promoted by the Assistance of the of the *Legislature*, and in what Cases it is better to leave things open, that every Man may *act* as *Occasion* directs; for it is certain, that as in some Respects the *Want* of *legal Provisions* have been found detrimental, so in others, *Restraints* of this sort have been *no less* prejudicial. The Nature and present *Circumstances* of *corporate Bodies* of *Tradesmen*, undoubtedly merit *Inspection*; for as the due Use of *Charters* obtained

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from the Crown, are of the utmost Benefit to the Subject, so all Abuses of them are both flagrant and extensive Grievances. The Power of *levying Fines*, raising *Quarterages* and other *Impositions*, without being subject to Examination, or Account to the *Body of People* upon whom such Sums are levied, is a very unjust and unreasonable *Power*, which ought to be taken away. The same kind of arbitrary Authority is apparently as ill-founded, tho' sometimes supported by modern Constructions of *Law*, by which *Parishes* are often burthened with the *Expence* of *Suits*, determined to their own Prejudice, and are forced to pay for the *Establishment* of a *tyrannical Government*, which though they know not how to *shake off*, they know as little how to *bear with Patience*. *Commissions* by Direction of *Parliament* for reviewing these Things, for enforcing *Authority* where it is for *general Benefit*, and for restoring *Liberty*, where *Power* has been *illegally* obtained, grown injurious in *process* of *Time* and *Change of Circumstances*, or unwarrantably extended, would be of great Utility, inasmuch as it would manifest the Attention of our *Superiors*, repress the Violence and Injustice of *ambitious* and *avaritious* Men, and relieve the *common sort*, who by their Labour and Industry are the most useful *Members* of *Society*, from such Oppressions as at pre-

sent four their Minds, and dispirit them in the Exercise of their Employments. Such *Commissions* would also prove Sources of useful Intelligence to the State, and enable us to apply to *better Purposes*, considerable Sums which are now spent in *luxurious Gluttony*, or diverted into *private Pockets*, and which with much greater Justice might be converted to the *Service* of the *Publick*, if upon mature Deliberation it should be found expedient any longer to *raise them at all*.

The last thing I shall mention, is the Necessity of enquiring into the *past* and *present State* of the *great trading Companies*, which in the Nature of Things *have* and *must have* a *vast* Influence, and are therefore capable of doing according as they use it, much *Hurt*, or much *Good*. These were all originally erected for the *Encouragement* of *Trade*; but how far of late Years especially they have been from *answering* that *Purpose*, how much they have contributed to encourage a *Spirit* of *Avarice* and *Stock-jobbing*, which is the Bane of *beneficial Commerce*; and what Opportunities they have given to *bold Projectors* and *artful Managers* to engross the *Wealth* of the *Nation*, which is sure to be employed in a scandalous Manner when it falls into such *dirty Hands*, is so well known, from the Remembrance we have of the *South-Sea Scheme*, the *Har-*
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borough Lottery, and the *Charitable Corporation*, that the Usefulness of such an *Enquiry* cannot be doubted or denied. It is certainly of the utmost ill Consequence to see in a *Country*, which in a manner subsists by *Trade*, numbers of People grow *rich* by the Management of other Men's Money Concerns, or raising *Fortunes* by the *Direction* of a *Company's Affairs*, while their *Traffick* so managed, is detrimental to the *Proprietors*. Neither is it *honourable* in respect to the Government, under which we live, that *private Men* should perfectly know and be thoroughly convinced, that such *iniquitous Things* are practised, at the same time that the *Publick* receives no Satisfaction, while the *Guilty* live in Affluence and Credit ; nay, perhaps are trusted with *Posts* of *high Importance*, instead of being *punished*. Such things not only *astonish* but *corrupt* the *Minds* of the *People*, who, following the Example of those they are taught to call their *Betters*, have Recourse to *Shifts* and *Artifices*, in order to raise a *Fortune*, instead of pursuing as they were wont, the plain Path to *Riches* and *Reputation*, by an honest Endeavour to promote their own and the Nation's Welfare, in the known Methods of Cultivation and Exportation of what grows, or is *manufactured* at home. Hence the mighty Difference between the *present* and *former times* ; the

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Incertaincy of so many *People's Properties*, and the Readiness which is shewn in embarking in *Lotteries* and other such like *Designs*, which flatter the prevailing Views of attaining *large Fortunes* quickly, and without *Activity*, which Humour was formerly the *Ruin* of the Common-Wealth of *Genoa*, and is at present become very formidable in *Holland*, though far short in the Mischiefs it does there, of what it produces here. Let therefore our *Companies* be restrained to things within the *Compass* of their *Charters*, let it be made manifest that they *perform these*, and let such *Branches of Business* as they have undertaken, and do not perform, be *left* to the Management of *others*, who by skilful Methods of employing their *private Fortunes*, would increase their *own Estates*, and do *signal Service* to the *Publick*.

In drawing up this succinct *Review* of the *principal Things* expected by the *People* from the *present Administration*; I can safely aver, that I have acted under no other Influence than that of *public Spirit*. In Respect to my Situation in Life I am as much *below Hope* as I am *above Fear*. I have no Intention to *flatter* any Man or any *Set of Men* on the Acquisition of *Power*, nor have I any particular Reason to be *afraid* of the Use which they may *make of it*. I thought a short Discourse of this
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Kind, might at this Juncture be *useful* and *necessary*; useful to refresh the Memories of the *Great*, as to their *Promises* before they were *so*; and necessary to the *People* that they might insist on just and rational *Demands*, and not to be *duped* into such *Requests* as might afford a Colour of *Justice* to their *Refusal*. How I have *executed* my *Design* it will be the *Reader's* Task to determine, it is sufficient for me that *I meant honestly*, that I have *acted* impartially, that I have slandered *no Man*.

Should the *Question* be asked how I come to know that these are the *Claims*, or *Wishes* of the *Commons* of *Great Britain*? I think myself bound to give a fair and ingenuous *Answer*. I have heard Men of all Ranks, as well in promiscuous Companies as in private Conversations, insist often upon *most* and sometimes upon *all* of these *Topicks*. as things which would give them *entire Satisfaction*. I have collected the same thing from the most *sensible* and *applauded* Papers written to promote the *Country Interest*, I find many of these *Points* recommended to the Considerations of *Members* by their *Constituents*. I am well assured that many *wise Men* and *worthy Patriots*, who are now in the *Administration*, have on proper Occasions declared for these *Demands*, and I have heard and believe that they *profess themselves* to be in the
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same Sentiments still. All which taken together have convinced me that *these* are *things* certainly and ardently wished for by the *Commons of Great Britain*, as necessary to their *Safety* and *Security*, which would afford them immediate *Ease*, and be productive of *future Happiness*; under which Persuasion I have thus collected and put them together in the *best Dress* I could, which tho' it may not be fit for them *to wear*, is all that my *Wardrobe* could furnish; and if any *Man* dislikes them therein, let him *array* them as much better as he pleases, he cannot give *himself* more Pleasure than he will give *me*, all my Concern is that they meet with a good Reception, in Order to which I would be content to be their *meanest Attendant*, rather than *Master* of the *Ceremonies*, to which I know myself *unequal*.

There are however some other *Reasons* which induce me to lay hold of this Opportunity, and which I shall very willingly confess. The *first* of these was the *Indignation* I conceived, at hearing some Men talk, as if the driving *certain Persons* from *their Posts* had answered all the *Ends* of the *Nation*, and that our Condition was absolutely altered in Consequence of the *Names* of the *great Officers* of *State* being *differently spelt* from what they were before. Alas! what is this to the *People*,
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what imports it to many *hundred thousand* Persons who occupies this *Employment*, or discharges that *Office*? It is the *Prerogative* of the *Crown* to appoint and remove *Ministers*, a *Prerogative* I hope we shall never see *invaded*, but the great *Concern* of the *People* is *Freedom* and the *Security* of that *Constitution* by which they enjoy it. For this they were anxious, exceedingly anxious *not long ago*, and for this they must be anxious still, till *such Steps* are taken, such *Alterations* made, and such *Rules* established, as may *free* them from all *Fears*, and make the *Return* of a *corrupt Influence* impossible. To endeavour to talk the *People* out of these *Hopes*, to discourage such *Expectations*, to insinuate that *Things* may be safely *postponed*, is doing the *utmost Mischief*, and therefore I cannot imagine that *any body* will have the *Affurance* to address themselves in this *Strain* to the *Publick*. In case they should, I have been *too quick* for them; in *plain Terms*, and in a *narrow Compass*, I have laid down the *Nature* of the *People's Claims*, and said somewhat of the *Reasons* on which they are founded; the *Writer* therefore that undertakes an *opposite Task*, must *disprove* the *one* and *refute* the *other*, or he will gain no great *Credit* by his *Performance*. Mistakes I have been doubtless liable to, but upon the whole, I dare say mine is the

People's Plan, not calculated to serve the narrow *Purposes* of *Party*, but built as the *Phrase* is among the genuine *Patriots* upon a broad *Bottom*.

Another Reason which moved me to this *Publication*, was the convincing such as are *true Friends* to their *Country*, that the *Mischiefs* we labour under are not *feigned* or *chimerical*, but *true* and *real*; yet such as may and ought to be cured; this I thought was the best Proof of the *Falshood* of that *Calumny*, which has so boldly imputed *modern Patriotism* to a Spirit of *Disaffection*. There is certainly a wide Difference between *Disloyalty* and *Discontent*; the Love of our Prince does not take from us a *Sense* of our *Misfortunes*, neither does it imply any *Obligations* to conceal them, because by *weakening* ourselves we *injure* HIM, nor is it possible that the *Kingdom* should be distressed, and the *King* remain unaffected. It is therefore the *Effects* of *Duty*, when the People make known their *Griefs* in a *legal* Way, they then make use of their great *Privilege* as *free* Subjects, and shew their Desire of *serving* the Crown, by expressing an *Expectation* of being put into a Condition to *serve it*, by the removal of such *Incumbrances* as *disable* them for the present.

It has therefore been the *Policy* of the *best Reigns*, for the *Government* to shew a greater Concern for the *People*, than for the
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immediate *Rights* of the *Sovereign*. Thus in the Days of *Queen Elizabeth*, the *Ministry* did not endeavour to raise a *large Revenue*, to multiply *Honours*, or to enlarge the *Royal Influence* by an *Increase* of *Places*. No, they took quite a contrary Method; they were extremely *frugal* in the Management of the *hereditary Estate* of the *Crown*, the greatest Part of which they applied to the *publick Service*. They repaired and augmented the *Navy*; they intrusted the *Security* of the *Nation* at home to its *natural Strength*, a numerous and well-disciplin'd *Militia*; they encouraged a *Spirit* of *Industry* and *Trade*; they employed the *Prerogatives* of the *Crown* in promoting the *Welfare* of the *People*. By these Methods they surprisingly changed the *Face* of *Affairs*, and from a low exhausted and dejected *Race* of *Men*, they suddenly raised an active, powerful, and flourishing *Nation*. By such Steps they equally served both *Prince* and *People*, and were themselves so happy, as to join *Popularity* with *Power*, and to be at once in Favour with the *Crown*, and on the best Terms imaginable with the *Subjects*. Neither was the Government ever distressed. Whatever *Supplies* were necessary, the *Nation* raised *cheerfully* and with *Alacrity*; when the *Queen* asked an *Aid* of the *City* of *London*, they granted her *double* what she de-

manded ; and on the other Hand, when her Majesty had *raised* a very large *Sum* for a *Service* in view, which afterwards appeared to be *unnecessary*, she *returned* it to her *Subjects*. This *mutual Confidence* was the Strength of that Government, which *kumbled* *Faction* at home, and *triumphed* over *foreign Foes*.

The *same Management* will at any time have the *same Effects*. To secure the Affection of the *British People*, the *safest* and *shortest* Method is to *deserve* it. It is a great Mistake to imagine, that the *People* have a natural *Aversion* to *Power*, the contrary is strictly true, if they find *Power* made Use of to *protect* them. Our Constitution has placed, and very wisely too, the *executive Part* of the *Government* entirely in the *Crown* ; but inasmuch as we are *free*, it implies that this is placed there for the *Benefit* of the *People*. If therefore the *Ministers* appointed by the King, discharge their Offices as they ought, his Reign will be *glorious* and his *People happy* ; but if they form to themselves *Schemes* of *Policy* inconsistent with the *Frame* of our *Government*, if they are weak enough to fancy that *Attention* to the *Royal Will*, may atone for *neglecting* the *national Interest*, or if they are so *wicked* as to attempt to *divide* what the Constitution hath so carefully *united*, they must necessarily raise

a *Spirit of Discontent*, for which *they* and not the *People* are accountable. This is as evident as any thing of a like Nature can be; and a better Use cannot be made of the *Freedom of Speech* at present permitted us, than to state truly and fairly, as I have done, the *first Principles* of our *Government*, so as that they may fall under the Comprehension of the *meanest Understanding*, and prevent any Man from becoming either a *Rebel* or a *Slave*; for want of knowing what *Power* he ought to *obey*, or how far he has a *Right* to *resist*.

A *third* Reason, and I shall mention no more, is the present *favourable Opportunity*. An *Opportunity* so happy, that for any thing we know our *Ancestors* never saw the like; and so far as human *Foresight* can extend, it is highly probable, that if we neglect it, our *immediate Posterity* will never see such a one again. An *Opportunity* which if we embrace, we may restore the *Constitution* to sound *Health* and its full *Vigour*, by purging off every *Relick* of *Corruption*, and freeing it from every *Stain* it has contracted in a long *Series* of *Time*. But that this may appear a just and rational *Argument*, and not a *frothy Declamation*, which of late *Years* has become the *fashionable Art* of *political Eloquence*, I will take some trouble to explain the *Nature* of this

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Opportunity, and to shew the Reader how truly it merits the *Encomiums* I have bestowed thereon.

To apprehend rightly the *Felicity* of the *present Conjunction*, we need only consider the Complaints not long ago made by some of the *worthy Patriots* now in *Power*, they told us that the *Wealth* of the *Nation* was *idly consumed* at home, and that its *Reputation* declined *abroad*; that our *Commerce* was in a *decaying State*; that we had suffered our *Allies* to be *undone* for want of *Assistance*, till at last we had *no Allies at all*. They insisted farther upon a yet more intolerable Mischief, that of our being deprived of *all Prospect* of *Redress*; they assured us, that the utmost of their Ability was to *expose* these things to the *view* of the *World*, but that by *ministerial Arts*, our *Chains* were so effectually *rivettèd*, that they could do *no more*; that *Eloquence* was *too weak* for *Numbers*, and that we must be satisfied with *knowing* our *Misfortunes*, the *Causes* and *Causers* of them, and *hope* for *nothing* more. What a *State* was *this*! and how *effectually* do we find ourselves *delivered*! *Ministerial Arts* are no more, our *Ministers* are *Men of Probity*; the very *Patriots*, who in the *Day* of our *Distress* wished us *Deliverance*; from such *Men* therefore we may reasonably *expect*, what under another *Administration* it would have been

been *Madness* to wish; we may expect that the *Wounds* of the *Constitution* will be thoroughly searched, and that the great *Disease* of the *Nation*, under the *Care* of such *Physicians*, will be radically cured.

On the other Hand, let us consider that the most plausible *Excuse*, offered in Defence of the late *Ministry*, was their being *cramp'd* by an *Opposition*. It was this they said hindered them from *redressing Grievances*; it was this that withheld them from such vigorous *Measures*, as might have restored the *Balance of Power* in *Europe*, and raised the *British Reputation* as high as ever. It was their *Apprehensions* from an *Opposition*, that induced them to conclude so great a number of regular *Forces* necessary; the same Cause they assigned when we expressed our Wonder, that in so many Years of *Peace* the publick *Debt* had scarce been lessened. In short, according to them it was the *Opposition* caused all our *Mischiefs*, and the *Nation* was given to understand in pretty broad *Terms*, that if their *Affairs* were neglected, it was in consequence of the first *Law* of *Nature*, *Self-Preservation*; and that it was ridiculous to fancy a *Ministry* would risque their own *Safety* to attend closely to publick *Business*, while they were thus pushed by an *Opposition*; but we now see even this *Pre-tence* taken away; we are not only freed from all our *Terrors* of excessive *Power* lodged

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in *bad Hands*, but we have likewise the Satisfaction of seeing, that our *Patriot Ministry* can receive *no Check* from an *Opposition*: no, the *Snare* is *broken*, and we are *delivered*. *Corruption* was the *Chain* that held together a *certain Party*; its *Links* are separated, and the *Connection* dissolved. To imagine that out of the *routed Remains* of these *flying Troops*, such a *Force* could be collected, as might look our *victorious Patriots* in the Face, is to fright ourselves with *Dreams* and *Chimeras*. The *Friends* of their *Country in Power*, and acting for the *Service* of their *Country*, can meet with *no Opposition*; it is impossible they should find any *Grounds* for it, even if we should imagine that there are *Men* amongst us *bad enough* to entertain any such *Design*, it would be to combat *Reason* with *Sophistry*, to oppose *Fraud* to *Wisdom*, and the *private Interest* of a handful of *selfish* and *ill-principled Men* to the *Publick Weal*, supported by the *Voice* of the *Nation*; we must therefore allow it to be certain, that at *this juncture* we may *hope all things* from *Men in Power*, and need apprehend *nothing* from the *Resentments* of *such* as have *lost it*.

I had Reason therefore to say, that this was an *extraordinary Opportunity*, and such a one, as we can scarce hope to *recover* if it be *lost*; for when was it known that the *People of Great-Britain* could absolutely

lutely rely upon a *Ministry*, or that a *Ministry* was entirely free from the *Fear* of *Opposition*? At present nothing can create any *new Disputes* in the *Nation*, but slighting or neglecting the *Nation's Interests*. While these are *attended* to, *Unanimity* must reign; and therefore in such a *Season* all the *salutary Laws* beforementioned are, if ever, to be *hoped for*. I know nothing more I have to add, unless it be the refuting all the few *Objections* that can possibly be made to what I have proposed; and as the doing this will take up no great Room, I am content to make my *Work* as compleat as I can by such an *Addition*.

We may possibly hear it said, that as under *this Administration* we can have no *Apprehensions* of *Corruption*, so there appears no visible *Necessity* for having *Recourse* to *so many* and *so strong Remedies*, when we have now in a Manner got over the *Disease*. I desire the Reader will observe that I do not say this *will be* objected, but only that it *may*. We live in an Age wherein many *odd things* have been *said*, and therefore *Suspensions*, tho' indifferently founded, may be *excused*. If ever such an *Objection* should be made, the *Answer* is clear and plain. These are *Remedies* of a *preventive Nature*, and such as cannot operate, unless *Corruption* should *return again*.

The *present Ministry* cannot be *affected* by them. All Parliaments must be *for them*, because their *Constituents* are *for them*; they can therefore find no Difference in Parliaments, continuing for *seven Years* or for *three*. But this is not all, if we do not receive these *good Things*, when these *good Men* are in *Power*, when are we like to have them? if this be not a *fit time*, when will a *fit time* come? if those who have convinced us of their *Expediency* will not *procure them*, who shall? far from any Mark of *Diffidence* is our making these *Demands*; on the contrary, it is the fullest Proof that the *People* confide in the *Ministry*, and the most *signal Token* they can afford them of their *Esteem*. For if we consider it strictly, it is desiring them to confer the *highest Honours* on *themselves*. Surely such a *Condescension* will be remembered in our *Histories*, and *Posterity* shall learn to *revere* the *Names* of their *Benefactors*, who fixed the *Freedom* of their *Country* on the firmest *Basis*, before they had well *tasted* of *Power*. Future *Patriots* shall *emulate* their *Virtues*, without hoping to *reach* them; a revived Spirit of *Liberty* shall enflame a *new Race* of *Poets* to sing their *Praises*, and whatever the *British Genius* shall perform hereafter, will be referred to *them* by whom it was *preserved*.

It may possibly be urged, that in the present *critical Conjunction*, there are so many *Affairs of Importance*, all of so *pressing* a Nature, that they are alike incapable of bearing either *Neglect* or *Delay*. But sure this ought never to be pleaded in *Bar* to the *most important Affairs*, and such as are least fit to be postponed. When there are many things of *Weight* to be done, we ought surely to take them in their *turn*, and if so, these must certainly have the *Preference*; all other Matters derive their Consequence from the *Connection* they have with our *Liberty*, but these are the very *Means of Liberty*, without having which, we cannot be sure of having *that*, or at least how long we shall *keep it*. This Objection puts me in mind of the *strange Discourses* that are sometimes made to a *sick Man*. He is put in Mind, that *such a Thing* concerns his *Estate*; *such a Thing* his *Reputation*; and *such another Thing* his *Family*. But the *wise Physician* tells him, *all these things, Sir, are of great Importance*; but be well before you think of them, your *Health* ought to be your present *Care*; and when you are able to stir about again, these things will certainly deserve your *Attention*. We must look in like manner to our *political Constitution*, if that be in *full Vigour*, we need not doubt that in time every thing will go

right, but while this is on its *last Legs*, it is impossible for the *People* to be *easy*, or to mind any thing else. We now know our *Wants*; we know too how they may be *supplied*; and to talk of the *Importance* of *other Things* at this time, is to use *improper Language*, and therefore come from *whom it will*, it is impossible it should be heard.

But it may be pretended, that how *desirous* soever all Men may be to carry these *several Projects* into *Execution*, yet at present it is *impracticable*, because, whether we will or no, *Time* must be *wanting*; the *current Business* of the *Year* must be *done*, the *King's Affairs* must *not* be *obstructed*; what relates to our *Concerns abroad*, must be *attended to*. Be it so. Still all this is nothing to the Purpose, and can be taken for *current Coin* by none, but such as are in the *Humour* to be *deceived*. The most essential Laws beforementioned are not *new Things*, or such as require *much Deliberation*; most of their *Forms* we have *already*, and as to the *Matter* of them, they cannot now surely admit of a *long Debate*, when they have been so often *scrutinized*, and have already the *Ministry's Approbation*. Add to this, that there is now *no Opposition* to delay their *Passage*; let them be but once *set on Foot*, they will make their *own Ways*, or the *People* will
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have an Opportunity of seeing *who hinders them*. The Nation has, as it were, an *interlocutory Judgment* in its Favour; we only wish to see it made *final*, and enter'd on *Record*. This is the Way to *end* all *Disputes*, to *dissolve* all *Parties*, to *heal* all *Divisions*, and by uniting us in one *common Cause*, to make us the *first Nation* in *Europe*, or at least to put us in the Way of being so *very soon*. Since therefore this is of such *infinite Concern*, and withall so *easy in itself*, since, there is nothing wanting but *Resolution* to act *right*, which, as I told you at the beginning of my Pamphlet, enabled a *sorry Cook* to make a *good Prime Minister*, since there is not one of these Laws, but might keep *Pace* with a *Road-Bill*, or at least get to the end of its *Journey*, with the *next Act* in Favour of *Westminster-Bridge*; methinks the People cannot be thought *too eager* in their *Expectations*, nay, I persuade myself they are not thought so; I am confident our *worthy Patriots* are more in *haste* than *they*, and long as much to *perform* their *Promises*, as an *honest Man* does to be *out of Debt*.

Upon the whole it appears I think clear to a Demonstration, that the present Safety and the future Prosperity of our *dear Country*, depends on the Conduct we pursue
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at this very *Instant*. We have now all things in our Power, except the Capacity of judging *how long* they may continue *so*, which is surely a very strong Reason, why we ought to act vigorously according to the *Lights* we have. The *old Serpent* CORRUPTION; which has so often threatened to *devour* our *Constitution*, lies now at *her Feet*, and which is, more, at *our Mercy*; but if we do not seize the *present Opportunity* to *bruise* his *Head*, he may recover Strength to crawl off to some *secret Den*, and from thence burst forth again, swollen with fresh *Strength* and *Fury*. We are *victorious* its true, but how little will our *Victory* redound to our Honour, if it appears we *know not* how to use it; if instead of following our *Blow*, we spend our Time in *huzzàing*, and vain of our *Prowess* shewn in the late *Combat*, forget to exert that *Wisdom*, which must secure to us the *Effects* of our *Conquest*.

All Parties will own the *Justice* of these *Reflections*; all Parties will agree that this is a most *critical Conjuncture*; let us then act upon this *Principle*, let us not *lose* time when it is so *precious*, let us not efface all Memory of our Ancestor's *Errors* by a more *notorious Blunder* of our own. We were *drunk* with *Joy* at the RESTORATION, we were *confounded* with the Sud-

dennefs of the REVOLUTION, whereby we loft both Opportunities of fecuring our *political Happinefs*, but thefe things are *paft* and cannot be *recalled*; let the Thoughts of them however put us upon our *Guard*, and fince in many other Refpects, we boaft of being as *wife Men*, and as *good Patriots* as our *Forefathers*, let us put the *Thing* out of *doubt*, and *ourfelves* out of *Danger*, BY BEING IN OUR SENSES NOW.

F I N I S.



